

Except on erosion-prone lands, there are no replanting restrictions. There are not even any restrictions regarding "wise land use". Mr Gibbs has himself commented that the best use for most of these lands is forestry. If that is the use, then replanting restrictions would not diminish the sale's value. If in the future these restrictions proved too restrictive, we have no fear that they couldn't be changed.

While purchasers will have to make annual rental payments these alone will not be any incentive to replant. Fair market rental on forest land is insignificant when compared with the other costs involved in forestry. If a company wanted to cut out and get out it would cost them (at most) next to nothing to do so.

The assets are relatively young. Only 10 per cent of the trees are 30 years old or more and 50 per cent are 14 years old or less. If the assets are going to be stripped, they will at least be stripped slowly.³

● Was the process right?

The Labour Government has decided to dispose of an asset which was created over several generations and Governments. It is an important decision. It is a decision which deserved open public discussion and comment *before* the decision was made.

At the very least, selling these assets should be a bipartisan effort. It isn't and National Party philosophy towards the sale and their policy towards the use of Crown forests and forest land differs from Labour's. National's SOE spokesman, Ian McLean, has said his party would, if elected, renegotiate unacceptable contracts. He further stated that a National Government would pass laws enforcing people who bought forests and logged them to replant.

Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Bolger said that it would be a disaster if a large portion of the State's forestry asset were sold to foreign buyers who then exported the bulk of the forests in the form of logs. He also feels that it is essential that there be an obligation on buyers to replant.

Will the sale of the Crown forest assets result in a fair and reasonable return to the people of New Zealand for their long investment in plantation forestry, or will it be a bargain for the purchasers? No one knows and with the sales occurring all at once, there will be no second

RECENT EVENTS

Commonwealth Forestry Conference

The 13th Commonwealth Forestry Conference was held in Rotorua from September 17 to 30 and attracted more than 220 delegates from 33 countries.

Theme for the conference was "Forestry – A Multiple-Use Enterprise".

There were three major conference sessions relating to the need for accountability in multiple-use forestry. These were concerned with:

- the contribution of technical innovation in developing and extending multiple use and the benefits which accrue;
- problems and solutions in description, assessment and valuation of forestry benefits;
- accountability in multiple-use enterprises.

Other important sessions were:

- Forestry case studies which covered research, education, rural and social development, community involvement, extension programmes, valuation procedures, management practice and a corporate approach on multiple-use forest resource management;
- Commonwealth initiatives on the Tropical Forestry Action Plan.
- Australian experience in plantation management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Among the recommendations adopted by the conference were some considered

chance. The only thing which can be said with certainty is that once the sales process is finished, the uncertainty surrounding Government's management of these assets will be finished.

Government's involvement in New Zealand's plantation forests has spanned at least 70 years. Over the next 10-15 years, the production from those forests is expected to double. It may triple over the next 30 years. Looking from the past into the future over 100 years of plantation forest development why is June 30, 1990 (the closing date for the bids) the optimum day to hold the "sale of the century"?

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of sufficient importance and relevance to be referred to the attention of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for October 1989 in Malaysia.

Global Warming

Recognising the effect of rising carbon dioxide concentrations on global climate and the potential dangers that climate change poses for mankind, the contribution that forests and wood-based products make to the storage of carbon, and that the manufacture of forest products require less fossil fuel and hence releases less carbon dioxide than the manufacture of many other substitute materials, the conference recommended to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that they urge member countries to institute programmes and incentives to promote both forest restoration and afforestation, and to encourage the greater use of wood products to ameliorate global warming.

Tropical Forestry Crisis

Recognising the increasing rate of loss of tropical forests, with consequent effects on biodiversity, global warming, and the need to safeguard the welfare of indigenous populations, the conference resolved that immediate and decisive action was needed to address the unprecedented pressures that now threaten tropical forests.

Following are some of its recommendations of particular interest:

- that the conference recommends to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting that they urge countries to institute programmes and incentives to promote both forest restoration and afforestation, and to encourage the greater use of wood products to ameliorate global warming;
- that the conference strongly supports the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) initiative while recognising that there is scope for more collaboration with non-government organisations, and a closer working relationship between foresters and environmentalists, and for refining targeting to ensure its effectiveness;
- that the Commonwealth Heads of

³ It must be noted that the New Zealand forest industry has a long and proven history of responsible management of their plantation forestland. Not all overseas companies have the same record.

Government meeting be urged to establish a special Commonwealth TFAP support fund to enable Commonwealth countries to play their full part in implementing the TFAP by increasing and strengthening the resources available for project preparation and implementation and for promoting regional activities, particularly those which promote the reconciliation of environmental interests and sustainable forest management;

- that to promote the TFAP, regional working groups be formed to encompass interests concerned with the environment, timber production, timber trade, forestry, agriculture, finance and economic development to carry out an immediate review of possible options for reconciling the objectives of conservation of biological diversity and protection of local people's interests on the one hand, and the continuation of sustainably managed timber production on the other.

The next conference is to held in Malaysia in 1993.

8th NZASIA Conference on Asia studies

The 8th NZASIA Conference, which attracted about 200 delegates, was held at the University of Canterbury from August 16 to 20. The delegates came from all parts of Asia and Australia to examine "Costs of Change in Asia" as they related to regional economics and politics, tourism, women's issues, business, Asian music and forestry. This was the first time that forestry featured in these biennial conferences, which have dwelt formerly on regional politics, economics and culture. By all accounts, forestry and the other major newcomer, Asian music, proved to be welcome additions to the programme and are likely to be retained at future conferences.

There were four keynote addresses to all delegates, and forestry dominated two of them. Dennis Richardson presented one of these at the opening session entitled "Costing Change or Changing Costs". The content of his address was as provocative as might be expected. He identified several controversial issues – natural forest management versus plantations, optimum versus maximum, eucalypts versus other species, science versus technology and culture versus cult – and then proceeded to "fling open the doors of an Augean stable of hobby horses" and challenge quite a few eco-

logical and economic "half-truths". The other keynote address relating to forestry was by Thayalan Muniandy, of the Consumer Association of Penang, who spoke about environmental degradation in the Asian tropics in general, including tropical forests. His presentation contained much damning evidence, but it was delivered with a voice of reason and it intimated a willingness to manage resource wisely rather than ban this or that altogether. Curiously, Mr G. Salmon, who was in attendance, also claimed that he has always promoted a similar view and espouses the ethic of sustained yield now for tropical forests just as he did for South Island beech forests! Is your memory to that effect any better than mine?

Up to 45 people attended each of the six forestry group sessions, two of which were concerned with forest products trade in the Asian/Pacific region and one each dealt with sustained yield capabilities of forests in Asia, deforestation patterns, possible solutions to deforestation and local perspectives on Indonesia,

Thailand, Inner Mongolia, Guanzhou and the Philippines. The Forest Research Institute Forest and Wildland Ecosystems Division turned on a display at its Ilam base, and on the last day a field trip was made to Peter Smail's farm at Hororata and to Craigieburn Park research station. Canterbury turned on one of its usual fine winter days for the time spent in the field, but with just a sufficient nip in the light breeze to demonstrate the need for farm shelter that Peter Smail proclaimed so enthusiastically and humorously.

The 18 forestry papers and two keynote addresses are to be formally published in a proceedings of the conference, while copies of all papers will be available in the libraries of three universities – Auckland, Victoria and Canterbury. Anyone interested in ordering a copy of the proceedings should contact Lisa Crozier at FRI, Ilam, or Graham Whyte at the School of Forestry, University of Canterbury.

A.G.D. Whyte



A conference tree-planting ceremony was held in the grounds of the Forest Research Institute to commemorate this important event. The Minister of Forestry, Hon. Peter Tapsell, is pictured planting a rimu tree, watched by the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, President of the Commonwealth Forestry Association, and some of the other delegates.